

reasons now. But there are things we can do, and we have a real obligation to do.

It is a brand-new problem—or new in the last 20 years. It is getting worse and worse, and it condemns these kids to a life of poorer quality and shorter length. It is something we absolutely must address.

I applaud the administration's decision yesterday. What they did is said obesity—which before was this kind of vague syndrome or observation—is a disease, and when you call it a disease, people recognize it as a disease, and then you start looking at prevention, care, and treatment to reverse it. That is the significance.

Two things: First, for the first time, a major Federal health program recognizes obesity as a disease. It is a treatable disease—preventable but also treatable. The second is that it demonstrates, once again, that Secretary Thompson and the administration are taking extremely seriously the obesity epidemic which is occurring in this country.

The administration is attacking obesity on a multitude of fronts. It is needed. In my mind, it is long overdue that this Nation address this new but rapidly growing epidemic.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—or the CDC, as we all know it—reports that because of poor nutrition and lack of physical activity, obesity is on its way of surpassing smoking as the leading killer in the United States of America. Obesity is on its way of surpassing smoking as the leading killer in the United States of America.

Obesity contributes to other diseases, the diseases in which I specialize; that is, heart conditions, heart disease. It also affects a whole range of issues: orthopedic, pulmonary injuries as well.

The immediate impact will be twofold. First of all, it will be easier for Medicare beneficiaries and individuals with disabilities who are Medicare beneficiaries to get treatment. The barrier to treatment will be lowered.

When Medicare makes a decision, it has a spillover impact to the private sector. I think the spillover impact will be substantial, although the private sector has already moved ahead. They have already increased reimbursement for appropriate treatment for obesity in many areas. But the fact that the Federal Government speaks with a loud voice will have an impact on the private sector.

The public and private sector have to be very cautious. We talk about this on the floor of the Senate every time there is a new definition of something that needs to be treated. We have to be very cautious in deciding which specific treatments to cover. We need to make sure the interventions are effective, but we need to also make sure they are cost effective.

There are several treatments now for obesity that are available. Science will allow us to determine which of these treatment modalities are most effective and which are most cost effective.

Also—this applies to the HIV/AIDS virus, which I mentioned earlier today, and to obesity, which I mention now—prevention is a critically important aspect of the equation. Early intervention, especially among children, is the key to preventing lifelong obesity and obesity-related illnesses.

Nonetheless, I want to applaud the administration for this bold step. It will help prevent obesity and greatly improve strategies for helping not only seniors and individuals with disabilities but all Americans.

SUDAN

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, there is a second issue I want to mention that I addressed 2 weeks ago on the floor of the Senate and want to follow up on. It has to do with a tragic situation in Sudan, in the western part of Sudan in the three states of Darfur, Sudan.

The situation there, even over the last 3 weeks, has steadily deteriorated. We have hundreds of thousands of refugees that are currently at risk. We are entering the rainy season there, and that makes the delivery of relief supplies very difficult.

Since my comments on the floor of the Senate, Secretary of State Powell, in the first week of this month, went to the Darfur region and made observations and certain requests. At about the same time, Secretary General Kofi Annan also visited the region and made certain requests. Senator BROWNBACK, our distinguished colleague from Kansas, subsequent to their visit, also visited the region and made observations and with a video camera took some traumatic footage of the devastation going on there. Another delegation from the House will be going shortly.

We have to take action to address this humanitarian problem. The administration is working hard to get relief to these people who are suffering, but there is systematic violence that is going on against the civilian populations in Darfur by the government and by the militias that are supported by the government. That violence must come to an end.

I spend a lot of time in the Sudan and each year go to southern Sudan as part of medical mission work that I do. In the coming weeks or months, I will be returning to Sudan as part of this medical mission work. I look forward at that point in time to seeing if we are having an impact in both the southern part of the Sudan but also in the Darfur region and will report back to this body. Hopefully we will be able to report that we are making progress. Two million people are being affected by this crisis, so it is a large crisis. I do ask the Government of Sudan to take immediate steps to end the violence in that part of the world.

RETIREMENT OF POLICE CHIEF JERRY HOOVER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to express my congratulations to Reno Police Chief Jerry Hoover on his retire-

ment. The City of Reno and the State of Nevada owe this public servant a tremendous debt of gratitude for his hard work and strong dedication to law enforcement and the public safety.

Although Mr. Hoover spent 36 years in law enforcement, his service to our Nation in fact began with his combat service in Vietnam with the 101st Airborne Division. Since then he has dedicated his life to making our Nation's communities safer and has served admirably the people of San Diego, CA; Boulder, CO; St. Joseph, MO; and Reno, NV.

Chief Hoover provided strong and innovative leadership during a very challenging time for the Reno Police Department. Like police agencies throughout the country, the department under Chief Hoover's leadership has significantly expanded its responsibilities in recent years to meet our Nation's homeland security needs.

Reno's police officers have met this new challenge while also policing one of our Nation's fastest-growing metropolitan areas.

During his tenure, Chief Hoover helped create the Reno Model PTO training program that provides post-Academy police training with an emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving. He also effectively drew on the resources of the entire Reno community to meet the city's law enforcement and public safety needs by initiating the Senior Auxiliary Volunteer Effort program, which trains volunteers 50 and older to assist with park and school patrols and special community projects.

Despite the demands of his position, Chief Hoover still found time to help train the next generation of law enforcement professionals through classes at the University of Nevada, Reno, and Nevada State College in Henderson. Even after his retirement from the Reno department, Chief Hoover will continue his lifelong commitment to effective law enforcement as a consultant to police agencies throughout the country.

Chief Hoover has led a distinguished career marked by generous service. Please join me in congratulating him on his retirement from the Reno Police Department and in wishing him luck in all his future endeavors.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I rise today to highlight the scourge of human trafficking. Every day, in countries around the world and right here in the United States, people desperate for economic opportunity and seeking to follow their dreams of a better life are lured from home by the promises of jobs and security. Sadly, though, all too often they find themselves trapped in a nightmare, imprisoned by violent criminals, abused, violated, deceived, bought, and sold as chattel. Some of these victims of trafficking disappear, never seen nor heard from again.

Every year, traffickers strip thousands of people of their freedom and